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ABHAR

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依歡的個人小檔案

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漫畫◎依歡

緋色王城

Scarlet Palace

1

緣之夢

緋色王城
1
漫畫◎依歡

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淀王的宮殿，聽說是用敵人的血染成的…

敵國市井出身的騙子陵廷，成為大王的寵臣。
父親不明的異族之子淵人，成為主掌後宮的內侍。
景氏世族之女寧湖被密謀成為王后送進了後宮，
他們共同服侍有暴君之稱的淀王珣，
也捲進了深不可測的宮廷密謀…
豪華的深宮迷情物語就此展開！

因為之前的《仙曲》畫了很多年，很久沒畫新的古裝故事了，很高興有新的古裝故事和大家見面！

《緋色王城》的故事三年前就開始醞釀，這之間也為了場景外出取材，這個故事比較特別的是：人物故事都是虛構的，但是它的設定是秦漢朝的風格，呃一應該算是秦漢時期的平行世界吧！因為是虛構，所以也少不了我的個人喜好就是了。

這一次故事的男主角陵廷，也是第一次畫這麼美麗（？）個性陰柔的男角，也很久沒畫溫柔個性的女主角了，很多新的嘗試都讓我在畫這篇故事時感受到不同的樂趣，希望讀者們也會喜歡新的故事囉！

NT-95

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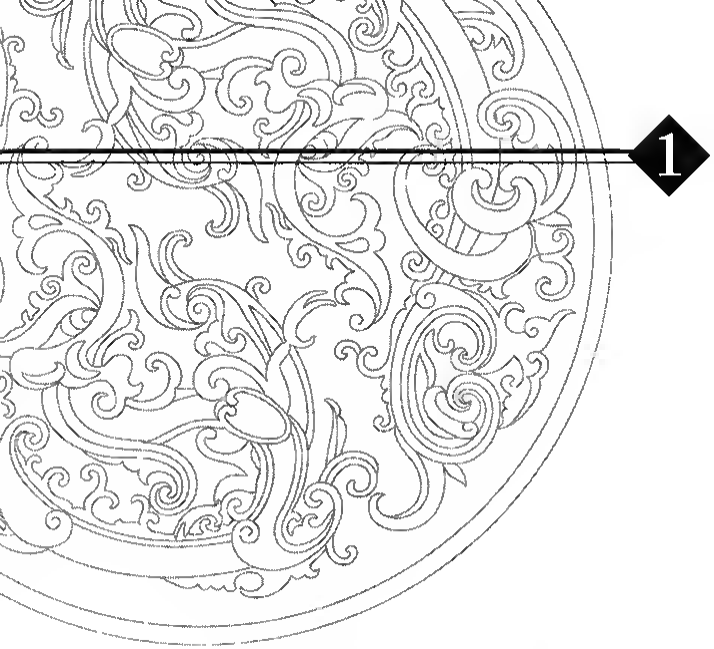
緋色の王城
Scarlet Palace



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Chapter 4 The Butterfly Dream

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A Note From the Author

Qi Kingdom
Capital City
UM... 40 COINS!
50 COINS! SIR!
LOOK AT THIS MERCHANDISE...
OKAY! IT'S A DEAL THEN! 50 COINS!
THANK YOU, SIR!
WHETHER A HOUSEHOLD SERVANT OR CONCUBINE.. IT'S TOTALLY UP TO YOU!

第一回 人質公子珣

Chapter 1 Prince Xun the Hostage

CAPTURE HER!
THAT SLAVE!
I PAID A LOT OF MONEY FOR HER!
DON'T LET HER ESCAPE!
I HAVE YOUR BONDAGE CERTIFICATE. WHERE CAN YOU FLEE TO?
BONDAGE CERTI-FICATE?
THAT THING IS TOTALLY USELESS!

WHAT? HOW CAN THIS BE...
YOU ARE A BOY?
DON'T RUN!
LOOK CLEARLY! I AM A BOY!
YOU PURCHASED A FEMALE SLAVE,
SO THAT CERTIFICATE DOES NOT APPLY TO ME!
Whose fault is it that foreign merchants are so easily deceived!
AH... HOW INFURIATING!
BUT WE MUST LEAVE HERE TOMORROW MORNING!
DAMN! I WILL MAKE THAT SLAVE-DEALER PAY FOR THIS!

HE WILL SEND US TO JAIL IF WE DON'T GIVE THE MONEY TO HIM...
CRAP...
BOSS TOOK AWAY ALL THE MONEY!
HE SHOULD DIE ALREADY!
FATHER AND MOTHER SOLD US TO HIM...
THEN...
HOW MUCH LONGER DO WE HAVE TO CARRY ON THIS CHARADE IN THIS MARKET?
WE CAN'T LEAVE IF WE DON'T REPAY THE MONEY THAT WE OWE HIM.

SIR!
YOU ARE DRESSED IN BLACK. YOU MUST BE AN ARISTOCRAT!
WILL YOU BUY ME?
I WILL SERVE YOU WELL!
HOW'S THAT?

THOSE WOMEN WHO ARE BEING SOLD...
ARE THEY ALL FROM DING KINGDOM?
SEEMS SO...
Where did the boss get them from?
DO YOU LIKE THEM?

HE IS CALLED PRINCE DING, SON OF KING DING. HE WAS SENT TO QI KINGDOM AS A HOSTAGE.
I HEARD THAT HE GOT THE CRIMINAL'S BRAND ON HIS FACE
BECAUSE HE CROSSED PRINCE QI.
HEY!
WHAT WAS THAT...
AN ARISTOCRAT WITH A CRIMINAL'S BRAND ON HIS FACE.
HE'S NO ORDINARY BRAT.
AND HE'S ONLY A LITTLE BRAT!
He's so tall, yet he has the face of a child
I AM BUYING THOSE WOMEN FROM DING KINGDOM.
LET THEM GO!
THIS IS...!
TAKE THIS!

THIS... IF THIS IS ALL YOU'RE PAYING...
HOW COULD SUCH A PITTANCE SUFFICE ...
WAH!
YOU KIDNAPPED THEM ALL FROM DING KINGDOM.
DOES THE PRINCE OF DING NEED TO PAY YOUR FEE?
OW...
HE'S...
PRINCE XUN OF DING...
OUR PRINCE!

UM... THANK YOU FOR RESCUING ME, PRINCE!
I WILL LEAVE FIRST THEN...
GO TO THE PRINCE'S RESIDENCE LOCATED IN WESTERN PART OF THE CITY.
THEY WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH ENOUGH MONEY FOR YOU TO RETURN TO YOUR KINGDOM.
THANK YOU... THANK YOU, PRINCE!
WE WILL ALSO AWAIT YOUR RETURN TO DING KINGDOM!
YOU ARE NOT FROM DING KINGDOM.
AND...

YOU ARE NOT A WOMAN.
I CAN'T LET YOU LEAVE HERE.
SOMEONE CALLED THE PATROL!
WE HAVE TO LEAVE HERE OR ELSE!
HOW AWFUL!
I AM IN SO MUCH TROUBLE!
.....

THIS IS A GRAVE CRISIS INDEED.
I CAN NO LONGER DISGUISE MYSELF AS A WOMAN.
Is this the end for me then?
I WASN'T TALKING ABOUT THAT!
PRINCE XUN IS A HOSTAGE OF HIS ENEMY KINGDOM!
HE INJURED A PERSON AND NOW HE'S HERE...
THIS WILL BURDEN US!
I THINK WE SHOULD ESCAPE FIRST...
YOU TWO!
SEEING AS I AM YOUR MASTER, I SHOULD KNOW HOW TO ADDRESS YOU.
WHAT ARE YOUR NAMES?
MASTER?

WE ARE NOT...
HE IS LINGLU,
I AM LINGYU.
WE ARE BROTHER AND SISTER...
NO, WE ARE JUST BROTHERS!
It's hard to change all of a sudden.
TAKE IT AND EAT IT!
AH, DAMN...
THIS IS THE LAST BIT OF FOOD IN OUR HOME.
I AM FAMISHED.
FIND SOME FOOD!

I AM PRINCE XUN FROM QING KINGDOM!
I AM THE SON OF KING QING!
DO YOU WANT ME TO...
ACCEPT IT WITH MY PALMS FACING UPWARD?
?
MY PALMS WILL ONLY FACE UP TO SHOW REVERENCE TOWARD MY ANCESTORS AND MY FATHER!
OTHERWISE THE GESTURE LOOKS LIKE I AM BEGGING ON MY KNEES!
I, PRINCE XUN...
WILL NOT BEG ANYONE!
IF YOU DON'T WANT TO EAT, THEN FORGET IT!

HERE YOU GO!
THIS LOWLY SERVANT LINGYU FROM QI KINGDOM ...
PLEASE OVERLOOK ITS CRUDENESS AND SAVOR IT, PRINCE!
MOST SINCERELY AND REVERENTIALLY PRESENTS A PIECE OF BREAD
I MAY HAVE CARELESSLY DROPPED IT IN THE SAND...!
WHAT DID YOU PUT IN IT?
Cough
Oh maybe I did that on purpose!!

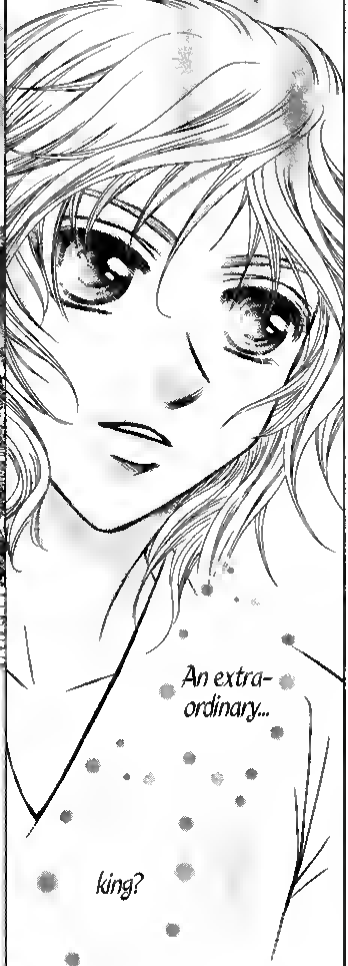
GREAT! I HAVEN'T EATEN MEAT IN SUCH A LONG TIME!
IT'S A GOOD THING WE STOLE THIS CHICKEN.
THAT BRAT ATE OUR ONLY PIECE OF BREAD...
AH! PRINCE!
COME AND EAT WITH US!
OH! RIGHT...
YOUR LOWLY SERVANT LINGYU FROM QI KINGDOM MOST SINCERELY AND REVERENTIALLY PRESENTS A PIECE OF CHICKEN...
BLAH BLAH BLAH

YOU ARE SO TROUBLE-SOME...
SO STREET RATS LIKE US
COMMIT LOWLY ACTS THAT REQUIRE US TO ABANDON SELF-ESTEEM.
TO A PRINCE, ESTEEM MUST BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN LIFE!
BUT TO US, RESPECT IS THE MOST WORTHLESS THING.
IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE PRINCE.
Rest assured and eat!!
THAT IS A STOLEN CHICKEN.
HOW COULD I EAT IT.
IT'S SO NASTY...
NO FLAVOR AT ALL.
IT CAN'T BE HELPED. SALT IS SO EXPENSIVE,
HOW COULD WE HAVE IT!
Thank you so much, Linglu!
It's so delicious!

I WILL...
BUILD A KINGDOM THAT IS HUNDREDS OF TIMES STRONGER THAN DING KINGDOM!
WHAT'S WRONG?
WHEN I RETURN TO DING KINGDOM...
I WILL LET EVERYONE BE ABLE TO AFFORD SALT.
I WILL LET YOU...
ESCAPE YOUR LIVES ON THE STREET.

WHAT AN ARROGANT BRAT!
BUT HE IS A LITTLE DIFFERENT.
OH REALLY?
I heard that because he refused to obey Prince Qi's commands,
Prince Qi personally carved the criminal's brand on his face.
Prince Xun glared defiantly at Prince Qi's eyes the whole time.
Though his face was covered with blood, he still refused to submit..
Prince Qi and everyone else were so astonished,
that they were afraid to proceed further.
IF HE COULD RETURN TO DING KINGDOM ALIVE,
HE WILL CERTAINLY BE AN EXTRA-ORDINARY KING!

PRINCE!
IS THE PRINCE OF DING HERE?
PRINCE! I HAVE FOUND YOU AT LAST!
I HAVE BROUGHT GOOD NEWS...
DING KINGDOM HAS SENT PEOPLE TO BRING US BACK TO OUR KINGDOM!


An extra-ordinary...
king?

PRINCE, THAT IS WONDERFUL ..
THINKING ABOUT YOUR HUMILITY, I...
BECAUSE YOUR FATHER KING DING HAS UNFORTUNATELY PASSED AWAY...
OUR QUEEN WANTS YOU TO RETURN AND ATTEND YOUR CORONATION!
LINGYU! LINGLU!
WHERE ARE YOU!?
RETURN TO DING KINGDOM WITH ME!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIVE AS STREET RATS ANY MORE!
I WILL GIVE YOU A HUGE MANSION, SILK CLOTHES AND ENDLESS MONEY!

PRINCE DING IS RETURNING...
THIS IS SURE TO START A WAR BETWEEN THE TWO KINGDOMS!
EVEN THOUGH HIS OFFER IS VERY ATTRACTIVE...
IT IS BETTER IF WE STAY AWAY FROM HIM.
WE ARE FROM QI!

BUT... YOU ARE BAREFOOT...
SANDALS?
OH YEAH!
TAKE THIS!
OLDER BROTHER ...
HAHA!
I'M MORE COMFORTABLE THIS WAY!
YOUR SHOES BROKE! I MADE THESE MYSELF.
That is...

BECAUSE... YOU ALWAYS SAVE THE BEST FOR ME...
LINGYU!
I WILL ALSO GIVE BROTHER THE BEST.
I WILL KEEP THESE SANDALS IN PERFECT CONDITION.
FARE-WELL!
WHAT?

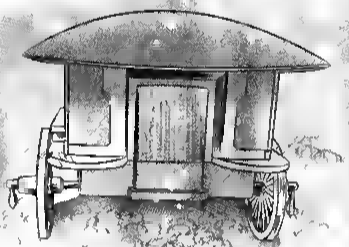
"MY PALMS WILL ONLY FACE UP TO SHOW REVERENCE TOWARD MY ANCESTORS AND MY FATHER!"

"OTHERWISE THE GESTURE LOOKS LIKE I AM BEGGING ON MY KNEES!"

I...
WASN'T BEGGING YOU!
I know...
LINGYU KNOWS.

This is the first time...

that Prince Xun abandons his self-esteem.



After Prince Xun returned to Ding Kingdom, he was crowned at the age of thirteen and became King of Ding – King Xun.

Three years later, King Xun personally led his army and destroyed Qi Kingdom.

Sixth year of King of Ding's reign
Capital City Mansion of Jing
FATHER! ARE YOU GOING TO OFFER NINGHU TO KING DING?
THE JING FAMILY ALREADY HAS PLENTY OF DAUGHTERS IN THE KING'S SERAGLIO,
NINGHU IS YOUR MOST BELOVED DAUGHTER!
EVEN THOUGH THERE ARE A LOT OF JING DAUGHTERS IN THE PALACE,
THEY ARE USELESS BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT WON KING DING'S AFFECTION.
OF COURSE!
HIS FAVORITE IS LORD CHAMBERLAIN LINGYU. THE KING DOESN'T CARE ABOUT HIS SERAGLIO AT ALL.
LINGYU IS NOT ONLY FROM QI KINGDOM BUT HE IS ALSO A EUNUCH!
THOSE DAMN EUNUCHS SHOULD ALL...
SHOULD ALL WHAT?

WHEN THE FAMILY SENT ME TO THE PALACE AS AN EUNUCH BACK THEN,
I REMEMBER THAT YOU WERE THE FIRST TO AGREE.
REST ASSURED. I WILL VIGILANTLY LOOK AFTER MISS NINGHU.
I UNDERSTAND.
I ENTRUST NINGHU TO YOUR CARE FROM NOW ON.
HIS POSITION IS MUCH MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOURS.
YUANREN'S CURRENT POSITION IS AS LORD CHAMBERLAIN TO THE QUEEN.
YUANREN ...!
THAT'S RIGHT.

MISS JING...
FOR SOME REASON, YOUR FATHER HAS APPOINTED ME AS THE COMMANDER OF BORDERLINE DEFENSE...
BUT I WILL RETURN TO THE CAPITAL IN NO TIME.
IN THE MEANTIME, I WILL DEFINITELY ASK MY FATHER TO SEND MY MARRIAGE PROPOSAL TO YOU.
PLEASE WAIT FOR ME TO RETURN.
Marriage proposal...
You don't even know my name...
Do you really want me to be your wife?

But.. My feelings are trivial.
My destiny
cannot be arranged by my own self.
IT'S TIME TO ENTER THE PALACE,
MISS NINGHU.
PAY NO HEED TO HIM.
HE WILL QUICKLY FORGET ABOUT YOU.
I KNOW THAT...
BROTHER YUANREN.

I WILL HAVE YOU BECOME THIS PALACE'S ONLY QUEEN.
That was like the color of blood...
The Scarlet Palace.
I KNOW.
I HAVE ALREADY TOLD YOU THIS...
THE KING IS INNATELY SUSPICIOUS AND APPREHENSIVE, AND SO HE DOES NOT APPROACH HIS SERAGLIO.
AND THEN FIND AN OPPORTUNITY TO APPROACH THE KING.
SO PLEASE DISGUISE YOURSELF AS MY PERSONAL SERVANT FIRST,
BUT I SWEAR TO YOU...
...SORRY ABOUT THAT, MISS NINGHU.

YES, YUAN...
I AM GOING TO PREPARE YOUR LIVING QUARTERS NOW.
NO, I SHOULD CALL YOU LORD JING!
AREN'T YOU THE NEW SERVANT?
I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU FOR A WHILE!
I AM LORD CHAMBERLAIN LINGYU'S PERSONAL SERVANT.
YOU ARE LORD JING'S PERSONAL SERVANT...
THERE IS ONLY ONE THING THAT YOU HAVE TO REMEMBER IN HERE.
WHEN YOU SEE LORD CHAMBERLAIN LINGYU..
DO NOT LOOK INTO HIS EYES.
HE CAN EASILY DECIPHER EVERYTHING.

HOW DO YOU DO! I AM ZILU!
YOU MUST BE AS HAPPY AS I AM!
HAPPY?
NO WAY...
DON'T YOU KNOW HOW FORTUNATE YOU ARE?
THERE ARE TWO CENTRAL FIGURES WHO SUPERVISE EVERYTHING IN THE PALACE.
ONE IS LORD CHAMBERLAIN LINGYU,
WHO MANAGES THINGS FOR THE KING.
THE OTHER IS THE QUEEN'S LORD CHAMBERLAIN JING YUANREN,
WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR VARIOUS TASKS IN THE SERAGLIO.
BOTH LORDS ARE VERY HANDSOME AND CHARISMATIC...
SO THEY BOTH HAVE ADMIRERS, WHO ARGUE EVERY SINGLE DAY...
Lord Lingyu is Number One!
Lord Jing is the sweetest!
Lord Jing wins!
Lord Ling is the most handsome!
WE ARE THE LORD CHAMBERLAINS' CHOSEN PERSONAL SERVANTS, ENVIED BY MANY PEOPLE!
There seems to be a very peculiar atmosphere.
Jealousy
Jealousy
Jealousy

LORD CHAMBER-LAIN OF HIS MAJESTY THE KING!
Just the man we were talking about!
Father said that he is the King's most trusted advisor.
Lord Chamberlain Lingyu...
Because he is from Qi Kingdom, in order to show his loyalty,
he voluntarily became a eunuch...

I heard that even the advisors of the King have to take note of his expressions...
Oh...
A sound...
It seems to be coming from his feet.
A wondrous bell sound..
stopped right in front of me.

Is he...
a man?

This person...
Oh no!
Brother Yuanren said that I mustn't look into his eyes!
THESE ARE THE NEWLY ARRIVED PERSONAL SERVANTS.

But..
He really looks too beautiful to be a man..
I should say that none of the ladies in the seraglio can surpass him!
Lord Chamberlain's eyes were so unnerving..
That was petrifying..
Except..
Eunuchs and women shouldn't be the same...
In any case, I should find Brother Yuanren quickly and tell him about this incident!
I can't locate him anywhere..

He's Lord Ling.. Not Lord Jing!
WHAT ARE YOU DAYDREAMING ABOUT?
Zilu said that the Lord Chamberlain* is in here!
HURRY AND HELP ME PREPARE MY NEW SET OF CLOTHES...
ARE YOU MY NEW PERSONAL SERVANT?
NO! YOU ARE MISTAKEN...
BACK THEN... I WAS VERY SUSPICIOUS OF YOU...
ARE YOU REALLY A EUNUCH?

* Both Yuanran and Lingyu are Lord Chamberlains. Yuanran for the Queen, Lingyu for the King.

I couldn't deceive his eyes after all...
What should I do?
I will be discovered!
UNDRESS!
I WANT TO PERSONALLY EXAMINE YOU.

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第二回 異族之子
Chapter 2: Son from a Foreign Tribe

I WANT TO PERSONALLY EXAMINE...
UNDRESS.
WHETHER OR NOT YOU ARE A EUNUCH.
I...

ARE YOU SCARED?
OR ARE YOU HIDING SOME-THING?
WHAT IS YOUR PURPOSE IN COMING HERE?
Such acute eyes...
DO YOU WANT ME TO UNDRESS YOU MYSELF?
PLEASE RELEASE HIM, LORD CHAMBERLAIN.
NO! MY LORD...
HE WENT TO THE WRONG ROOM BY ACCIDENT.
PLEASE STOP.

I PROMISE THAT HE WILL NOT REPEAT HIS MISTAKE AGAIN.
I AM AT FAULT FOR NOT GIVING HIM A PROPER ORDER.
I EVEN ALLOWED MY NEW PERSONAL SERVANT TO WALK AROUND CASUALLY. SO I OFFER MY APOLOGIES TO YOU.
HIS NAME IS ZILU.
THIS IS YOUR REAL PERSONAL SERVANT.
...YES! LORD JING!
COME HERE NOW!
HOW DULL.
WHAT IS THIS!

ALL OF YOU CAN LEAVE!
I AM GOING TO SLEEP.
comes from the anklet on his foot..
That is...
So the bell sound around Lord Ling...
MY LORD, HE IS CALLED NINGHU.
YUANREN, WHAT'S HIS NAME?
OH?
THE KING PERSONALLY PLACED THAT ANKLET ON MY FOOT.

YUAN... LORD JING!
SHOULDN'T I CHANGE MY NAME?
IT'S BEST TO USE YOUR OWN NAME.
LINGYU WILL SEE THROUGH YOU IF YOU USE A FALSE NAME.
THE NAMES OF JING DAUGHTERS ARE ALWAYS KEPT PRIVATE.
NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW THEIR ACTUAL NAMES
I WILL REMEMBER YOUR NAME...
NINGHU.

I am incapable of deceiving Lord Ling's eyes...
That's right...
HAVE YOU NOTICED?
YOUR ENEMIES ARE NOT THE LADIES IN THE SERAGLIO.
IT'S LORD LINGYU.
OH?
At that time..
ENEMY?
I truly did not understand Brother Yuanren's words

HOW LUXURIOUS ... Completely different from what I imagined.
THIS WILL BE YOUR RESIDENCE IN THE PALACE.
THIS IS MY RESIDENCE IN THE PALACE.
LIVING TOGETHER WITH BROTHER YUANREN?
PLEASE SLEEP ON THE BED INSIDE!
BECAUSE CURRENTLY, YOU ARE MY PERSONAL SERVANT. SORRY ABOUT THAT.
That's true.. Personal servants have to tend to their master's every need, day and night
WELL... IT'S BETTER IF I SLEEP IN OUTER CHAMBER.
I AM A SERVANT!
INSIDE THIS ROOM, I AM YOUR SERVANT,
MISS NINGHU.

My first day in the palace..
is finally over..
IT'S TIME TO GET DRESSED. ALLOW ME TO HELP YOU!
BROTHER YUANREN!
Can I really stay within this palace?
Even though I am very apprehensive,
I should trust Brother Yuanren's...
MISS NINGHU.

I... I CAN MANAGE IT MYSELF!
YOU ALSO HAVE SERVANTS AT HOME.
MISS NINGHU...
YOU HAVE TO ADJUST TO THE LIFESTYLE IN THE PALACE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
I AM A EUNUCH,
YOU DON'T NEED TO FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE.
YOU DO NOT HAVE TO VIEW ME AS A MAN.
YOU ONLY NEED TO...
SEE ME AS A SERVANT WHO TENDS TO YOU.
I know that..
But..

Brother Yuanren..
DO NOT WORRY...
I WILL BE RIGHT BESIDE YOU.
His blue-gray eyes..
can almost chase away my anxiety..
IT'S BEEN A LONG DAY.
PLEASE GO TO SLEEP EARLY!
I...

Jing Mansion
JING YUANREN!
WHAT IS THIS?
BROTHER KUIJI...
WHAT'S WITH HER APPEARANCE NOW?
NINGHU WAS GOING TO BECOME KING DING'S WIFE!
MISS NINGHU IS NOT GOING TO BE A WIFE,
BUT THE QUEEN OF DING.
IF SHE IS PRESENTED TO THE KING DIRECTLY,
SHE WILL ONLY BE ONE OF THE MANY LADIES IN THE PALACE.

KING DING HAS A MYSTERIOUS PERSONALITY,
AND HE RARELY APPROACHES HIS SERAGLIO.
AND LORD CHAMBERLAIN LINGYU...
IS ALSO AN OBSTACLE IN APPROACHING THE KING.
MY CAREFUL ARRANGE-MENT...
IS NOT TO BE UNDERSTOOD BY AN INSIGNIFICANT OFFICIAL LIKE YOURSELF.
YOU!
I WILL TAKE MY LEAVE NOW.

DAMN THAT YUANREN!
HE DARES TO BELITTLE ME!
HE MUST HAVE SOME TRICKERY UP HIS SLEEVE.
DON'T LET HIM DECEIVE YOU, NINGHU!
BUT,
BROTHER YUANREN IS OUR REAL BROTHER!
Yuanren...
is our real brother.
WHO IS BROTHERS WITH HIM!
I DENY HAVING ANY RELATIONSHIP WITH THAT MUTT!
BROTHER KUIJI...

A huge event in our family...
happened about ten years ago.
YUAN-REN...
FROM NOW ON, YOU WILL RESIDE IN THIS PLACE.
IS THAT HIM?
I WONDER WHICH OF THEM HAD A CHILD OUT OF WEDLOCK...
I THINK HE IS NAMED YUANREN?
WHAT AN ADORABLE BOY!
LIFT YOUR HEAD AND LET US SEE YOU!
Are you shy?

AH! WHAT COLOR ARE THOSE EYES?
IS HE A CHILD FROM A FOREIGN TRIBE?
HE IS IN FACT A FOREIGNER'S CHILD...
NO WONDER NO ONE WANTS TO OFFICIALLY ADMIT HIM AS A DESCENDANT OF THE JING FAMILY. .
FOREIGNER?
A child born from an affair with a foreigner...
is more lowly than a child of a slave or prostitute.

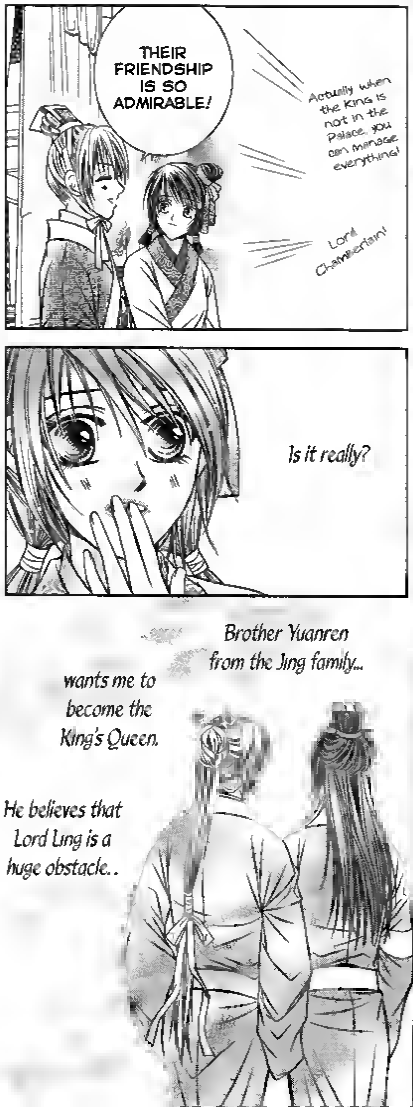
Father and the other uncles..
no one admits to being Yuanren's father.
The family secretly discussed this issue several times,
and finally made an announcement to the clan members
ALTHOUGH YUANREN'S BIRTH MOTHER IS IN FACT A FOREIGNER,
HE STILL HAS JING FAMILY BLOOD.
ACCORDING TO THE ELDER'S INVESTIGATIONS
HENCEFORTH ALL FAMILY MEMBERS MUST CALL HIM "SIR" OUT OF RESPECT.
Who is his father?
What?
ABOUT...
THE IDENTITY OF YUANREN'S FATHER...

AND WHOSE CHILD HE IS...
THAT SHALL REMAIN A SECRET, NEVER TO BE REVEALED.
WHAT? WHY CAN'T IT BE SAID?
BECAUSE HE IS THE CHILD OF A FOREIGNER...
BROTHER YUANREN!
BRO-THER!
I think... Even though we cannot say who his father is,
Yuanren is still a member of the family

From that point on.
I believe that Brother Yuanren is my relative.
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT, MISS NINGHU?
... NOTHING MUCH.
Therefore ...
I also have faith in Brother Yuanren now.

THERE IS SO MUCH TO BE DONE IN THE PALACE.
I DON'T WANT TO HELP YOU.
JING YUANREN! WHERE DID YOU GO?
Lord Lingyu?

LORD LING, I FINISHED ARRANGING EVERYONE BEFORE I LEFT THE PALACE.
BUT THE ROYAL TAILOR ASKS ABOUT THE KING'S RITUAL COSTUME FOR THIS YEAR,
THE ROYAL SCHOLAR ALSO HAS A BUNCH OF QUESTIONS WAITING...
SHOULDN'T LORD LING SOLVE HIS ASSIGN-MENTS?
THE KING IS AWAY AT THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM, NOT IN THE PALACE.
I ALSO WANT TO RELAX A BIT!
AH!
I WANT YOU TO HELP ME OUT!
ACCORDING TO THE RULES IN THE PALACE, I CANNOT HELP YOU...
I FEEL...
FORGET THAT! THE THINGS IN THE PALACE ARE NOT SO CLEARLY DIVIDED BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS!
IT'S DECIDED!


THEIR FRIENDSHIP IS SO ADMIRABLE!
Actually when the King is not in the Palace, you can manage everything!
Lord Chamberlain!
Is it really?
Brother Yuanren from the Jing family...
wants me to become the King's Queen.
He believes that Lord Ling is a huge obstacle..
WELL...
I WILL HELP YOU OUT JUST THIS ONE TIME.
THAT'S RIGHT!
BESIDE YOU WHO ELSE CAN I FIND?
.....

Actually, I... do not want to be Queen at all!
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT?
EH!
HOW COME WHENEVER I SEE YOU, YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE A EUNUCH...
BUT MORE LIKE A GIRL?
WHEN YOU SAW ME BACK THEN, YOU DIDN'T GREET ME!
MY... MY LORD!

PLEASE LET GO! LORO LING!
MY LORD!
THERE IS A REASON FOR NINGHU'S FEMININE APPEARANCE.
HE IS A SLAVE ADOPTED BY THE FAMILY AT A YOUNG AGE.
FROM THE BEGINNING, HE HAS BEEN PREPARED AS A GIFT FOR THE PALACE.

BECAUSE HE WAS CASTRATED AT SUCH A YOUNG AGE,
HE GREW UP RATHER DELICATE AND FEMININE.
NINGHU'S BEAUTIFUL APPEARANCE ...
IS WHY MY LORD HAS THIS MISCONCEPTION.
OH REALLY? HOW CONSIDERATE OF THE JING CLAN...
TO SEND SOMEONE LIKE THAT TO THE PALACE.
ANYWAY, YUANREN!
THE ROYAL TAILOR IS YOUR PROBLEM!

MY LORD!
I WILL TAKE MY LEAVE NOW...
I... MUST HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED BY LORD LING!
PLEASE DO NOT WORRY.
EVERYTHING IS PLANNED OUT. PLEASE IGNORE LORD LINGYU.
I WILL ALSO BE AROUND YOU AT ALL TIMES.
PLEASE ENDURE IT FOR NOW.

I know that Brother Yuanren...
is carrying an enormous responsibility
But when facing Lord Lingyu...
and his piercing eyes that can look through my soul...
I am still fearful.

LORD JING?
ZILU GREETS MY LORD.
LET ME ASK YOU.
THAT DAY WHEN NINGHU MISTAKENLY ENTERED LORD LING'S CHAMBER...
WAS IT BECAUSE YOU PURPOSELY MISDIRECTED HIM?

I...
DID NOT...
DO YOU STILL WANT TO LIE IN FRONT OF ME?
NO... NO!
IT WAS MY IDEA.
I ASKED HIM TO DO IT.

Lord Ling..
It's not enough..
to wrap up my breasts
Will he really believe Brother Yuanren's explanation?
Lord Lingyu
suspects that I am a girl..

YUANREN ...
I HAVE BEEN WITH YOU IN THE PALACE FOR SO LONG...
YOU CANNOT DECEIVE ME.
SO,
NOR CAN I...
DECEIVE YOU.
I WILL SAY IT BLUNTLY.

At that time..
Having just entered the palace, the oblivious me,
was tangled in a palace conspiracy for the first time.
I WANT NINGHU...
TO BE MY PERSONAL SERVANT.

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Chapter 3: Conspiracy Deep Within the Palace
第三回 後宮深謀

YUAN-REN...
LET NINGHU BE MY PERSONAL SERVANT!
YOU GO FIND SOMEONE ELSE
I CAN ALSO GIVE YOU MY PERSONAL SERVANT.
MY LORD!
LORD LING...
WHY DO YOU ONLY DESIRE NINGHU?

SO...
IT'S SIMPLE!
BECAUSE EVERYONE SAYS THAT I AM THE MOST BEAUTIFUL MAN IN THE PALACE.
I MERELY WANT A LOVELY PERSONAL SERVANT TO TEND ME.
ALTHOUGH HE IS CURRENTLY MY PERSONAL SERVANT,
EVENTUALLY HE WILL BE PRESENTED TO THE SERAGLIO.
NINGHU ENTERED THE PALACE IN ORDER TO SERVE THE LADIES IN THE SERAGLIO.
IF THAT'S THE CASE, THEN IT IS UNFORTUNATE FOR YOU.

I CAN OBTAIN ANYTHING I WANT.
YUANREN, IN THIS PALACE...
HMPH...
SORRY ABOUT THAT, MY LORD.
MY LORD!

IS MISS NINGHU AWAKE?
PLEASE ALLOW YUANREN TO WASH AND COMB YOUR HAIR!
THIS... I CAN DO IT MYSELF!
PLEASE DON'T WORRY AND LEAVE IT TO ME.
THIS IS MY RESPONSIBILITY.

Among the boys of the Jing family,
Brother Yuanren was the finest archer and hot seman
Even Father said that he could become a great general of the battlefields
But I still remember the past...
Brother Yuanren is really fastidious..
Not only are his movements swift but they are also graceful
ALL THE LADIES OF THE SERAGLIO LIKE TO USE THIS FRAGRANCE WHEN COMBING THEIR HAIR
I THINK THAT IT IS EXCELLENT TOO.
But now...
You don't understand my regret...
OH RIGHT, BROTHER YUANREN!
AFTER THIS, PLEASE ALLOW ME TO...
SERVE YOU AS WELL!

WHEN I WAS AT HOME, I OFTEN HELPED BROTHER KUIJI AND FATHER COMB THEIR HAIR.
NINGHU IS BEST AT COMBING HAIR.
I AM YOUR PERSONAL SERVANT AFTER ALL,
SO I CAN'T DISAPPOINT YOU.
REALLY?
SORRY TO TROUBLE YOU THEN.
Brother Yuanren's hair is so soft...

I FINISHED COMBING. DO YOU LIKE IT?
I DO, THANK YOU.
YOU DIDN'T EVEN LOOK!
I FEEL IT MUST BE GORGEOUS.
TAKE A LOOK AT THE MIRROR!
If our family didn't send Yuanren into the Palace...
His destiny could have been very different.
Does Brother Yuanren think like I do?
Is it because...
he uses fragrance to wash his hair every day in the Palace?
HOW ENVIABLE.
LORD CHAMBER-LAIN!
IT'S SO EARLY IN THE MORNING AND YOU ARE ALL LOVEY-DOVEY.
AH...

I DON'T WANT TO EITHER!
NO... I WAS JUST SURPRISED.
YOUR EXPRESSION SAYS...
BUT IN A LITTLE WHILE, THAT ROYAL SCHOLAR WILL BOTHER ME AGAIN!
YOU NEVER COME TO MY RESIDENCE.
"WHY IS HE HERE AGAIN?"
...
THE LORDS ARE DISCUSSING SERIOUS MATTERS, SO WE SHOULD LEAVE FOR NOW!
LORD JING AND YOU ARE SO HARMONIOUS TOGETHER.
I AM REALLY ENVIOUS.
WELL...

NOT ONLY DOES HE COMB HIS OWN HAIR,
HE ALSO DOES NOT PERMIT ME TO ENTER HIS BEDCHAMBER WHEN HE IS ASLEEP.
ZILU?
HE DOES NOT ALLOW ME TO APPROACH HIM WHEN HE BATHES OR DINES.
I HEARD THAT LORD LING ALWAYS TREATS HIS PERSONAL SERVANTS THIS WAY, BUT...
FOR REAL?
IT SEEMS THAT LORD LING...
DOESN'T LIKE ME.
PERHAPS...
IT'S TRUE...
THE MORE DISTANT I AM FROM HIM, THE LESS THAT HE WILL FIND ME NECESSARY!
I THINK THAT HE WILL UNDERSTAND YOUR ACTIONS.
MAYBE YOU SHOULD...
BE MORE ENTHUSIASTIC IN TAKING CARE OF HIM.
SUCH AS PAYING MORE ATTENTION TO THE LITTLE MATTERS THAT HE OVERLOOKS, AND BECOME MORE CONSIDERATE...

YOU ARE INDEED UNIQUE!
THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR REMINDER!
I HAVE SEEN PERSONAL SERVANTS WHO WERE CASTRATED AT A YOUNG AGE,
THEY ARE NOT AS KNOWLEDGE-ABLE AS YOU ARE!
DURING MY CASTRATION PROCESS, I WAS BEDRIDDEN FOR FIVE MONTHS BEFORE I RECOVERED
WHAT?
YOU PROBABLY DON'T REMEMBER THOSE SUFFERINGS!
BECAUSE MY FAMILY IS DESTITUTE ...
MY PARENTS WANTED TO SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO THE PALACE AS PERSONAL SERVANTS.
BOTH MY OLDER BROTHERS ENDED UP DYING BECAUSE OF THEIR SEVERE WOUNDS.
ONLY I WAS ABLE TO SUCCESSFULLY ENTER THE PALACE.
Zhu
THE GOOD THING IS THAT I STILL HAVE A YOUNGER BROTHER.
HE CAN PASS ON OUR FAMILY NAME
SO I MUST WORK MORE DILIGENTLY!

WE ALSO WANT TO BECOME CELEBRITIES LIKE LORD JING AND LORD LING!
YOU SHOULD TOO!
MY LORD!
Zilu

YOU MUST BE VERY EXHAUSTED!
YOU HAVE TO TAKE CARE SO MANY LADIES' LIVES,
MY RESPONSIBILITY IS TO MANAGE THE SERAGLIO.
YOU CAN START BY MEETING THOSE WIVES!
CURRENTLY THE KING DOES NOT HAVE A QUEEN, BUT HE HAS FIVE WIVES.
PLUS ONE MISTRESS, AND HUNDREDS OF CONCUBINES.
EH?
smile
A sigh?
THEN...
LET'S START WORKING.

GREETINGS LORD CHAMBERLAIN OF THE QUEEN!
YOU CAN START REPORTING TODAY'S TASKS!

Brother Yuanren...
actually has to manage so many things every day.
As Lord Chamberlain of the Queen..
Lord Jing has a different aura indeed.
MY LORD!
THE QUEEN DOWAGER REQUIRES AN INCREASED NUMBER OF FEMALE SERVANTS FOR LADY Yi...
SOME PARTS OF THE PALACE NEED TO BE REPAIRED... ALSO THIS YEAR'S NEWLY SELECTED PALACE SERVANTS...
MY LORD, THESE ARE THE SILKS FROM THIS YEAR'S FOREIGN TRIBUTE.
HOW SHALL WE GIFT THEM TO THE LADIES?
THE KING HAS ALREADY DECREED.
I WILL MAKE DECISIONS INDEPENDENTLY.

LADY XIAYAN IS FROM TONG KINGDOM IN THE SOUTH.
SHE LIKES SILKEN FABRICS WITH BIRD PATTERNS.
I UNDER-STAND.
LADY YI IS FROM OUR KINGDOM, AND QUEEN DOWAGER REFERRED HER INTO THE PALACE.
THIS LAVISH AND SOLEMN SILK PATTERN IS SUITABLE FOR HER.
THEN PLEASE SEND THEM TO THE TWO LADIES.
THE TWO LADIES DELIVERED THIS MESSAGE ...
THEY WANT YOU TO *PERSONALLY* TAILOR THEIR DRESSES AND DELIVER THEM.
I UNDER-STAND.
Personally?
Did I just...
see a child?
Eh?

LADY HUAIQI IS FROM QI KINGDOM.
SHE HAS A GENTLE NATURE
AND LIKES PALE ELEGANT FABRICS.
I see her again!
LADY HUAIQI REQUESTS YOU *PERSONALLY* TAILOR HER DRESS AND DELIVER IT.
I UNDERSTAND.
.....
SHE IS THE ONLY WOMAN WHO THE KING WILL APPROACH,
SO HER STATUS IS VERY SPECIAL.
Only her?
The king has so many wives and female servants, but he will only approach one?

IN THIS PALACE, OTHER THAN YOU AND I,
SHE IS THE ONLY PERSON WHO KNOWS YOUR TRUE IDENTITY.
LADY MINGHE, I THINK THAT YOU SHOULD KNOW,
IS ALSO A DAUGHTER OF THE JING FAMILY.
EVEN THOUGH I KNOW THAT YOU ARE A GIRL,
I WON'T HELP YOU IF YOUR IDENTITY IS DISCOVERED.
YUANREN'S PLAN IS TOO RISKY.
IT COULD LEAD TO EVERYONE'S DOWNFALL.
LADY MINGHE...

YOU ONLY HAVE TO KEEP THIS SECRET.
I WON'T TELL ANYONE.
GOOD LUCK TO YOU, NINGHU.
ALSO,
PLEASE *PERSONALLY* TAILOR MY DRESS AND DELIVER IT.
Personally again ?
YES.
NEXT WE HAVE TO VISIT TWO MORE RESIDENCES ...
ONE OF THEM IS THE KING'S CONCUBINE ...
MY LORO!
AH!
THAT CHILD HAS STOLEN THE SILK!

LORD JING!
THIS IS ALSO A WIFE OF THE KING.
HELLO!
SHE IS PRINCESS XIANGRUI FROM INDIA.
Speaking of which...
Could she be the King's child?
STOLEN?
WHO ARE YOU CALLING A THIEF?
WAIT! OON'T RUN AROUND!
WE ONLY HAVE TO WAIT...

What? She is the King's concubine?
She's obviously a child
THIS IS THE KING'S CONCUBINE, ZIJI.
I ONLY WANTED TO SEE THIS YEAR'S NEW PATTERNS SOONER.
I DID NOT STEAL!
I UNDER-STAND. PLEASE FORGIVE MY NEW PERSONAL SERVANT.
HMPH!
OKAY, LET'S RETURN, ZIJI.
OH RIGHT!
PLEASE *PERSONALLY* TAILOR THE DRESSES AND DELIVER THEM!
YES.

I'M SO TIRED...
I DIDN'T THINK THAT THIS PALACE COULD BE SO IMMENSE...
DO YOU HAVE TO WALK LIKE THIS EVERY DAY?
I'M USED TO IT.
THERE IS ONE MORE BOLT OF SILK,
BUT IT CANNOT BE GIVEN AWAY.
THIS IS THE MOST TREASURED GOLDEN SILK FROM THE SOUTHERNMOST KINGDOM.
IT IS NOT JUST RARE, IT IS PRICE-LESS.
I have never seen... anything this beautiful before...

ON THE DAY OF THE QUEEN'S CORONATION ...
I WILL PERSONALLY PRESENT THIS CELESTIAL DRESS
I AM SAVING THIS FOR THE QUEEN.
BECAUSE IT IS ONLY FIT FOR A QUEEN.
Does Brother Yuanren mean to say
That he will give this to me later?

I WANT THIS SILK.
LORD CHAMBER-LAIN?
THE KING DOESN'T HAVE A QUEEN.
SO ONLY I CAN HAVE IT AND NO ONE ELSE.
TAKE IT.
YES...!
MY LORD.
THIS IS A TRIBUTE. YOU MUST OBTAIN THE KING'S PERMISSION IN ORDER TO TAKE IT AWAY.

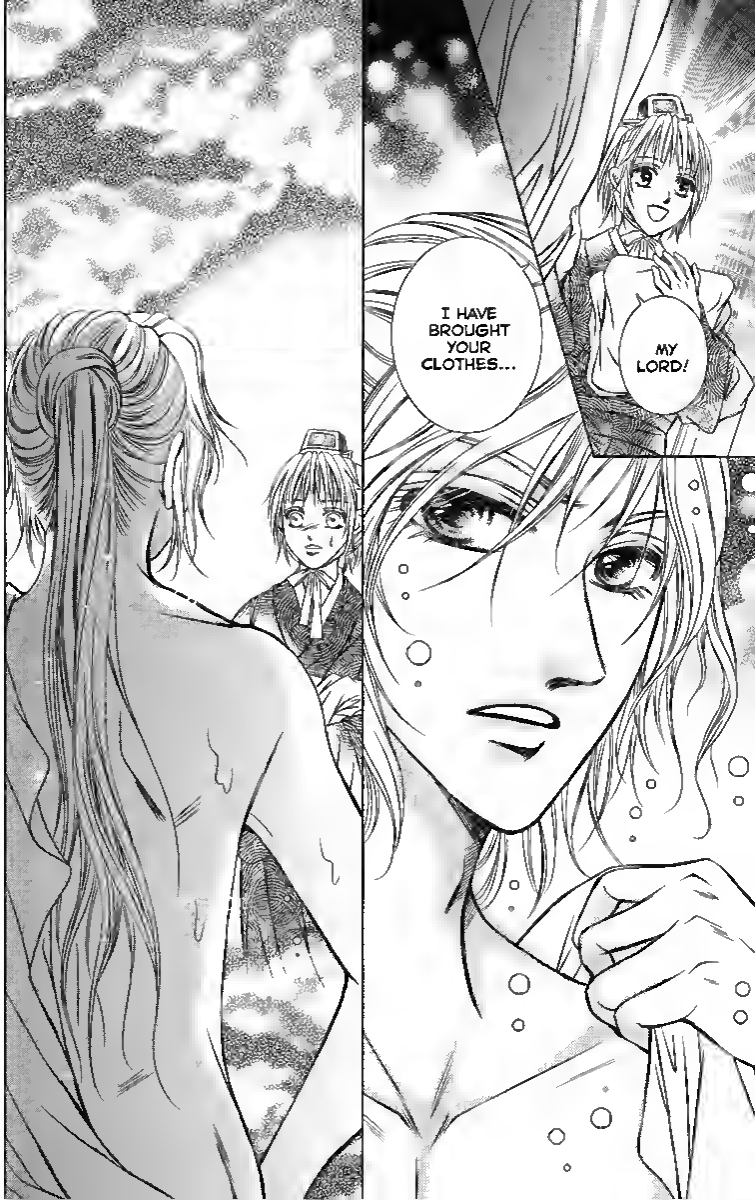
PERMIS-
SION?
ANYTHING
I WANT.
Lord
Lingyu?
YUANREN...
ARE YOU
JOKING
WITH ME?
THE KING
WILL GIVE
ME...

THROW IT OUT.
MY LORD...
THIS IS VERY PRECIOUS...
I DON'T TREASURE ...
THOSE KIND OF THINGS.
DON'T LET ME SEE IT AGAIN.

ONLY FIT FOR A QUEEN?
I NEED THE KING'S PERMIS-SION?
THAT YUANREN...

"Because of the undesirable climate, the Nanyu Kingdom's military campaign."
"is extended three more months."
Three months...
WHAT IS THIS...
YOU SHOULD HAVE TAKEN ME WITH YOU IN THE FIRST PLACE!

He forgot to bring his clothes.
"BE MORE ENTHUSIASTIC IN TAKING CARE OF HIM..."


I HAVE BROUGHT YOUR CLOTHES...
MY LORD!

I AM NOT A EUNUCH.
I AM...
THAT'S RIGHT...
IT IS AS YOU HAVE WITNESSED ...
MY LORD...
DOES IT SURPRISE YOU?
A NORMAL MAN.

LORD LINGYU!
I DIDN'T THINK THAT YOU STILL HAVEN'T LEARNED...
THE LESS YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS PALACE, THE BETTER OFF YOU ARE.
ヒュッ

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第四回 蝶之夢

Chapter 4: The Butterfly Dream

Lord Lingyu...
is not a eunuch...
This is...
an unspeakable secret!
If the King knows the truth...

Once this secret is revealed...
ZILU!
WHAT HAPPENED?
SEEMS SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED IN LORD LINGYU'S BATHING ROOM.
HIS PERSONAL SERVANT ZILU...
CALL THE ROYAL PHYSICIAN!
Lord Lingyu will...

MY LORD, HE STAYED IN THE WATER FOR TOO LONG...
THOUGH HE IS STILL ALIVE, HE CAN NO LONGER FUNCTION AS A NORMAL PERSON.
ACCORDING TO THE RULES,
HE CANNOT REMAIN IN THE PALACE.

Several days later.. Unbeknownst to many,
the palace officials sent Zilu back to his hometown.
did not investigate in the matter at all.
During this time, Lord Lingyu..
IT MUST BE ME!
WHY DOES IT HAVE TO BE THIS WAY...
ZILU...

I AM THE MOST SUITABLE PERSONAL SERVANT FOR LORD LINGYU!
YOU? I AM MORE SUITABLE!
What...
THAT ZILU MUST HAVE DONE SOMETHING OBSCENE!
EVEN THAT BRAT WANTS TO BECOME LORD LING'S PERSONAL SERVANT?
are they saying...
I AM MUCH BETTER THAN ZILU! LORD LINGYU WILL CHOOSE ME!
HE DESERVES HIS ULTIMATE DEMISE!
YOU ARE SO DESPICABLE!
ZILU ONLY LEFT A WHILE AGO, HOW COULD YOU DENOUNCE HIM LIKE THIS!
ARE YOU...
LORD JING'S PERSONAL SERVANT?

Zilu...
At that time...
What exactly did you discover?
These people...
YOU ARE ALSO... STUPID ENOUGH TO ASCEND TO THIS POSITION.
RIGHT! I HEARD THAT YOU COME FROM LORD JING'S FAMILY...
ARE YOU PROUD BECAUSE OF YOUR BACK-GROUND?
YOU SHOULD TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF! BRAT!
THE NEXT UNFORTUNATE VICTIM COULD BE YOU.

EH?
YOU WILL STAY HERE.
YES!
I HAVE TO RETURN TO THE JING MANSION TODAY.
YOU CANNOT APPEAR.
BECAUSE ...
I HAVE TO ATTEND A FUNERAL.
IT IS YOUR FUNERAL.

Is this all because..
he wants me to become the Queen?
Brother Yuanren...
wants m
to disappear from my family?
THIS MATTER MUST BE KEPT SECRET FROM THE CLAN MEMBERS.
ONCE YOU BECOME THE QUEEN
FALSIFYING YOUR DEATH FROM ILLNESS IS THE BEST EXPLANATION.
YOUR IDENTITY WILL BE RESTORED.

Brother Yuanren also knows...
If the plan fails,
then it is deception of the King.
What kind of person are you?
Your Highness...
We will undoubtedly die as a consequence,
but we could also lead to the death of our clan members.

Will he like me...
and allow me to become the Queen?
HOW UNCOMMON...
AREN'T YOU ALWAYS WITH YUANREN...
NEVER LEAVING HIS SIDE?
LORD CHAMBER-LAIN!

LORD JING IS ATTENDING SOMETHING OUTSIDE THE PALACE...
I KNOW.
I HEARD THAT HE IS ATTENDING THE FUNERAL OF A JING FAMILY MEMBER,
THE FUNERAL OF A SHORT-LIVED GIRL.
IN ORDER TO ELEVATE THEIR POSITIONS, JING MEMBERS KEPT ON SENDING THEIR DAUGHTERS INTO THE PALACE.
LOSING A DAUGHTER IS REALLY A HUGE LOSS FOR THEM.
BUT FOR THAT GIRL...
PERHAPS IT WAS HER FORTUNE NOT TO ENTER THIS DARK PALACE.

THE GIRLS IN THIS PALACE...
WON'T GAIN THE KING'S FAVOR AND LOVE EVEN IF THEY BECOME HIS WIVES.
THEY CAN ONLY BECOME LADIES OF THE PALACE, BURIED IN THE SUNLESS SERAGLIO.
THEY CAN NEVER BE HAPPY.
My lord?
THEN ARE YOU ALSO...
UNHAPPY IN THIS PALACE?
ME?
IN THIS PALACE,
I CAN HAVE WHATEVER I WANT.

NO...
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT...
IF YOU CAN HAVE WHATEVER YOU WANT...
WHAT IS THERE TO BE UNHAPPY ABOUT?
I DO NOT LACK ANYTHING...
THEN,
HOW WILL YOU KNOW WHAT YOU MUST TREASURE...
AND WHAT YOU ABSOLUTELY CANNOT LOSE?

LORD CHAMBERLAIN, SOME THINGS...
ZILU...
IS AN INSIGNIFICANT PERSONAL SERVANT IN YOUR EYES.
CAN ONLY BE OBTAINED THROUGH OTHER PEOPLE'S WILLPOWER!
BUT DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH HE CARED ABOUT YOU?

HE WAS INJURED AND SENT AWAY...
BUT NOT ONLY DID YOU NOT CARE, YOU DIDN'T STOP IT EITHER!
WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT THEM?
THEY BECOME MY PERSONAL SERVANTS BECAUSE THEY ONLY WANT TO ELEVATE THEIR OWN POSITIONS.
EVEN AFTER SOMEONE DROWNS AND BECOMES USELESS,
THEY STILL WANT TO HASTILY REPLACE HIM.
THAT'S NOT IT!
ZILU SINCERELY WANTS TO SERVE YOU!
YOU DISTANCED YOURSELF FROM HIM, AND HE WAS VERY SAD!
REALLY ...
THEN, HOW ABOUT YOU BE MY PERSONAL SERVANT?

SHOW ME...
THE FEELINGS YOU HAVE FOR YUANREN...
THE EXACT SAME FEELINGS.
THIS WAY...
I WILL BELIEVE YOUR WORDS.
Lord Lingyu...

"THE FEELINGS YOU HAVE FOR YUANREN..."
"SHOW ME.. THE EXACT SAME FEELINGS."
When Lord Ling said those words..
I seemed to feel his loneliness
Could it be my delusion?
Lord Lingyu...
Does he really want me to be his personal servant?

ZIJI?
IS JING YUANREN HERE?
PRINCESS XIANGRUI?
I CAN SEARCH FOR IT FIRST!
EH?
Messing up the room!
PLEASE STOP...
LORD JING IS ATTENDING SOMETHING OUTSIDE THE PALACE...
NOT HERE? THAT'S EVEN BETTER!
THEN LET'S RETURN!
WE CANNOT COME HERE, ACCORDING TO THE RULES!

LORD JING IS REALLY AMAZING!
DID HE FINISH TAILORING ALL OF THE DRESSES?
FOUND IT!
When did Brother Yuanren make those dresses?
BECAUSE LORD JING IS ALWAYS ABLE TO FINISH ALL OF HIS TASKS,
EVERYONE TROUBLES HIM ON THIS OCCASION.
THIS IS ONE OF OUR ANNUAL ENTERTAIN-MENTS.
LORD JING NOT ONLY FINISHES ON TIME, BUT ALSO CRAFTS THE DRESSES BEAUTIFULLY!
DID YOU HELP HIM?
I really don't know... how Brother Yuanren is able to do it?
NO...
SO YOU SHOULD LEARN FROM HIM!
IT IS YOUR FORTUNE TO BE LORD JING'S PERSONAL SERVANT.

IT'S THE TRUTH!
ZIJI!
IF YOU WERE LORD LING'S PERSONAL SERVANT,
WITH YOUR STUPIDITY, YOU WOULD HAVE DIED A LONG TIME AGO.
PLEASE TELL ME ABOUT IT!
USUALLY DIE OR ARE INJURED WITHIN THREE MONTHS DUE TO OBSCURE REASONS.
EVEN THOUGH WE REPORT ALL OF THEM AS ACCIDENTS
BECAUSE LORD LING'S PERSONAL SERVANTS...
NO ONE KNOWS THE REAL REASON.

SO NO ONE RAISES ANY OPPOSITION WHEN LORD LING WANT SOMEONE DEAD.
EH...
But... I opposed him!
Is Lord Lingyu... really this frightening?
HOW COME NO ONE IN THE PALACE INVESTIGATES?
WHO DARES TO INVESTIGATE UPON LORD LINGYU?
LORD LINGYU IS THE KING'S MOST TRUSTED ADVISOR.
HE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE KING'S EVERY THING!

And I..
asked Zilu to approach Lord Ling, and care for Lord Ling.
Is it because of my words..
that Zilu was in that accident?
Was it Lord Ling..
who let Zilu become like that?

YES.
LORD LING ALSO WISHES IT.
WHY?
DO YOU KNOW WHAT KIND OF A PERSON LINGYU IS?
YOU WANT TO BE LORD LINGYU'S PERSONAL SERVANT?
BECAUSE... EVEN THOUGH I BELIEVE IN BROTHER YUANREN,
THIS DECEPTION IS INDEED VERY DANGEROUS.

IF WE FAIL, IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT BROTHER YUANREN AND ME,
THE ENTIRE JING CLAN MAY BE EXECUTED.
SO I...
MUST BECOME THE KING'S ONLY QUEEN.
WITH HIM BESIDE ME,
I DEFINITELY CAN LEARN ABOUT THE KING.
ZILU SAID THAT LORD LING DOESN'T LIKE PERSONAL SERVANTS TO BE TOO CLOSE TO HIM,
SO I ONLY HAVE TO BE CAREFUL, AND MY IDENTITY WON'T BE DISCOVERED.
LORD LING IS THE KING'S CLOSEST ADVISOR.

to allow this kind of thing happen again.
MISS NINGHU ...
Zilu's injury..
I want to know the reason.
I also do not want...

THAT BRAT..
DID YOU HEAR?
ALSO WANTS TO BE LORD LINGYU'S PERSONAL SERVANT
THAT'S CROSSING THE LINE.
ZIJI?
PRINCESS XIANGRUI!

YOU REALLY ...
WANT TO BE MY PERSONAL SERVANT?
slash
What an ominous sight..
I cannot care about the opinion of others.
At this point..

BECAUSE I CAN FIND A NEW PERSONAL SERVANT,
YUANREN SENDS HIM TO SERVE YOU.
SO MANY REQUESTS!
THEREFORE HE MUST RETURN TO ME BEFORE DARK.
BUT NINGHU HAS JUST ENTERED THE PALACE, SO HE HAS MANY THINGS YET TO STUDY.
THANK YOU FOR UNDERSTAND-ING THIS.
I DON'T NEED ANYONE TO BOTHER ME AT NIGHT ANYWAY...
SO...
I HAPPILY ACCEPT.

I WILL HAVE WHATEVER I WANT.
YUAN-REN,
WHAT DID I SAY!
NINGHU,
COME HERE TOMORROW MORNING!
This is a dangerous decision.
I know.

I can no longer fear this pair of eyes.
It seems that Lord Lingyu's unfading piercing eyes..
can look into my soul.
But I tell myself...
AS YOU WISH.

Mother.
You told me...
NING-HU...
YOU ARE A DAUGHTER OF THE JING FAMILY,
EVEN THOUGH YOU HAVE THE TITLE OF A LADY, YOUR POWER IS STILL USELESS AND INSIGNIFICANT.
BUT...
YOU CAN ONLY LIVE YOUR LIFE ACCORDING TO OTHER PEOPLE'S ARRANGE-MENTS.
YOU CAN STILL FIND HAPPINESS WITHIN THEM.

AMONG THE JING DAUGHTERS IN THE PALACE,
SOME ARE LONELY FOR THE REST OF THEIR LIVES,
WHILE OTHERS BECOME ADMIRABLE WIVES
If..
I am able to become the Queen of the seraglio,
Will the Jing family and I receive the ultimate happiness?
Is this why Father and Brother Yuanren,
thought of every method..
to make me the Queen?

MY LADY, YOU SHOULD REST.
BROTHER YUANREN.

THAT'S RIGHT.
I HAVE TO BE LORD LING'S PERSONAL SERVANT TOMORROW.

Lord Lingyu was able to win the King's trust and favor.

I heard that the King has always neglected his seraglio
that he has never even visited his wives' chambers

How did he...
obtain the King's heart?

Even though she does not see Lingyu as her enemy,
but
Miss Ninghu..
Lord Jing should also sleep early!
Lingyu already sees her as his nemesis

LORD CHAMBER-LAIN...
UM...
WHAT DOES MY LORD WANT ME TO DO?
You are just staring at me.
I DON'T KNOW EITHER.
I DON'T WANT TO DO ANYTHING WHEN THE KING IS ABSENT.

I DON'T HEAR ANYTHING.
MY LORD!
LORD CHAMBER-LAIN! THERE IS ALSO THE ROYAL SCHOLAR...
I was here first!
Stop pushing!
MY LORD! THE ROYAL HATTER NEEDS TO DESIGN THE NEW MODEL!
BUT LOOK OUTSIDE...
BY THE WAY,
I HEARD THAT YOU ARE A HAIR EXPERT.
THEN PLEASE HELP ME COMB MY HAIR!

ARE YOU BETTER AT STYLING MALE OR FEMALE HAIR?
WELL...
SHOULD BE FEMALE.
THAT'S RIGHT...
YOU WERE TO SERVE UNDER THOSE SERAGLIO LADIES.

WHAT TYPE OF HAIRSTYLE DO YOU LIKE?
WHATEVER YOU WANT.
A FEW THINGS TO NOTE...
IF I WERE TO SEE THE QUEEN DOWAGER,
WHEN I WALK INSIDE THE SERAGLIO,
WHO IS TALKATIVE BUT HAS MANY RULES,
I DON'T WEAR A LAVISH HAIRSTYLE.
I LIKE TO DRESS AS A FEMININE BEAUTY.
So there are such distinctions..

But I don't feel such isolation.
Zilu said... He doesn't like to be close to his personal servants.
NINGHU UNDER-STANDS.
A NEAT HAIRSTYLE IS ESSENTIAL WHEN I LEAVE THE PALACE,
BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER INSIDE THE PALACE.
THEN...
WHEN YOU VISIT THE KING...
WHAT TYPE OF HAIRSTYLE DO YOU PREFER?

MY LORD!
Lord Lingyu?
DO NOT...
ASK ABOUT THE THINGS BETWEEN THE KING AND ME.

All of a sudden... he...
seems to have changed completely into another person.
HERE,
LET ME COMB YOUR HAIR FOR YOU TOO!
I ALSO KNOW HOW TO DO THIS.
MY LORD!
I AM ALSO A PERSONAL SERVANT...

YOU WILL CERTAINLY BE A BEAUTY WITH LONG HAIR.
UNLIKE THE OTHER PERSONAL SERVANTS,
YOU CAN GROW YOUR HAIR LONG.
AS MY PERSONAL SERVANT,
YOU HAVE MANY PRIVILEGES.
EXCEPT... IF YOU STEP INTO THE FORBIDDEN TERRITORY...
THEN...

IT IS ALSO YOUR PRIVILEGE...
TO BE CLOSER TO DEATH THAN ANYONE ELSE.

THIS HAIRPIN IS MY FIRST PRESENT TO YOU.
YOU WILL DEFINITELY LIKE IT.
At that moment...
Did lord Lingyu...
want to kill me?

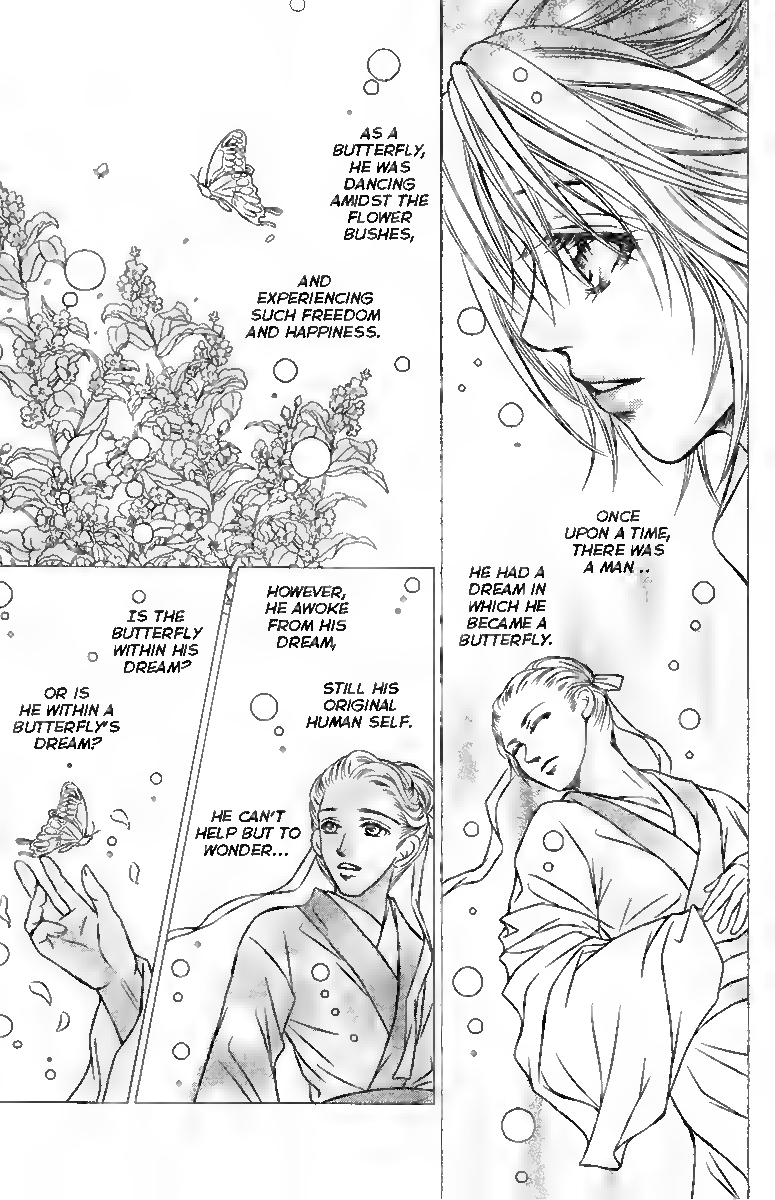
WHAT'S WRONG?
WAS IT TOO DIFFICULT FOR YOU TO BE WITH LINGYU?
BROTHER YUANREN!
ISN'T LORD LING THE KING'S MOST TRUSTED SUBJECT?
BUT WHENEVER I MENTION THE KING,
LORD LING SEEMS TO COMPLETELY CHANGE INTO ANOTHER PERSON...
I AM JUST VERY CONFUSED...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO OVER THERE TOMORROW.
I WILL EXPLAIN TO HIM.
THERE IS NO NEED!

LINGYU IS NOT ONLY THE KING'S FAVORITE.
BACK THEN WHEN THEY RETURNED FROM THE QI KINGDOM TOGETHER,
MANY THINGS HAPPENED DURING THE INTERVAL.
THERE SEEMS TO EXIST AN INVISIBLE THREAD...
NORMALLY IT IS LOOSELY INVISIBLE...
BETWEEN HIM AND THE KING.
BUT ONCE SOMEONE TAMPERS WITH IT,
THE TWO'S RELATION-SHIP WILL IMMEDIATELY BECOME TENSE.

SO YOU HAVE COME AGAIN?
I THOUGHT THAT YOU WOULD IMMEDIATELY GIVE UP.
I WAS RECKLESS YESTERDAY.
I WILL DEFINITELY BE MORE CAREFUL TODAY.
What kind of feelings...
exist between Lord Ling and the King?

FIRST PLEASE MEET WITH THE ROYAL HATTER AND THE ROYAL SCHOLAR.
THEY HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR A LONG TIME!
I DON'T WANT TO SEE THEM!
AS YOUR PERSONAL SERVANT,
NINGHU WILL BEHAVE JUST LIKE ZILU DID,
AND SERVE YOU WITH ALL MY HEART.
HOW ABOUT THIS!
YOU CAN TELL ME A STORY.
EH?

YOU WON'T TELL ME ANY?
WHO SAID THAT HE WANTS TO SERVE ME WITH ALL HIS HEART?
Lord chamberlain even plays dirty tricks!
Brother Yuanren would never do that!
WHENEVER YOU FINISH A STORY,
I WILL SEE ONE PERSON.
A STORY ABOUT A BUTTERFLY AND DREAM.
WELL...
THEN... I WILL TELL YOU...
BUTTER-FLY?


ONCE UPON A TIME, THERE WAS A MAN ..
HE HAD A DREAM IN WHICH HE BECAME A BUTTERFLY.
AS A BUTTERFLY, HE WAS DANCING AMIDST THE FLOWER BUSHES,
AND EXPERIENCING SUCH FREEDOM AND HAPPINESS.
HOWEVER, HE AWOKE FROM HIS DREAM,
STILL HIS ORIGINAL HUMAN SELF.
HE CAN'T HELP BUT TO WONDER...
IS THE BUTTERFLY WITHIN HIS DREAM?
OR IS HE WITHIN A BUTTERFLY'S DREAM?

I LOVE THIS STORY SO MUCH...
AH! I HAVE HUMORED YOU...
OKAY! I WILL SEE ONE PERSON.
IS IT POSSIBLE THAT ALL WE SEE BEFORE US, INCLUDING OUR FEELINGS, IS ONLY PART OF A DREAM?
WHILE OUR REAL SELVES ARE STILL DEEP IN SLUMBER...
LORD CHAM-BERLAIN!
THE PRIME MINISTER REQUESTS YOUR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION.

I WILL WAIT FOR YOU HERE.
WHY?
THE LORDS WILL DISCUSS POLITICS, SO I SHOULD NOT BE IN THEIR PRESENCE...
THERE IS NO NEED.
HOW CAN YOU NOT WATCH A GOOD DRAMA!
LORD LINGYU...
THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE OTHER LORDS HAVE AN URGENT MATTER TO DISCUSS WITH YOU.

In front of the Prime Minister
He dares to sit down.
I HAVE INVITED YOU OVER,
TO DISCUSS THINGS ABOUT THE KING.
IN ORDER TO INCREASE THE MILITARY SIZE, THE KING INCREASED THE TAX RATE.
I FEAR THAT THE PEOPLE CANNOT TOLERATE IT.
YEARS OF WEARISOME WARFARE THAT SEEMS ENDLESS...
ALSO NEGATIVELY AFFECTS THE KINGDOM'S STRENGTH ...
I REALLY DON'T UNDER-STAND...
ALSO ABOUT THE QUEEN SELECTION...

WHAT DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?
ABOUT THE BUTTERFLY YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT...
IS IT CAPABLE OF DREAMING?
LIKE HOW YOU AND I WOULD DREAM?
MY LORD!
YOU DESPICABLE EUNUCH!
I HAVE HAD ENOUGH!
IF NOT FOR THE KING'S FAVORING YOU,
WHY WOULD THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE OTHER LORDS...
COME AND BEG BEFORE A LOWLY SERVANT LIKE YOU!

YOU SPEAK TRUTHFULLY.
LINGYU IS NOTHING MORE THAN A EUNUCH.
BESIDES, I COME FROM THE FALLEN QI KINGDOM,
SO I AM A HOMELESS EXILE.
IF NOT FOR THE KING'S AFFECTION...
I WOULD MERELY BE AN INSIGNIFICANT PRISONER OF WAR.
Lord Lingyu..

IF I SPEAK TO THE KING,
THEN HE WILL EVENTUALLY LISTEN TO ME.
YOUR ASSUMPTIONS ARE RIGHT...
THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE OTHER LORDS WANT MY ATTENTION
IN HOPE THAT I WILL DELIVER YOUR SUGGESTIONS TO THE KING.
BUT DO YOU KNOW...
WHY THE KING ONLY LISTENS TO ME AND NO ONE ELSE?

THAT'S BECAUSE...
I ANSWER TO NO ONE EXCEPT THE KING HIMSELF.

There is an invisible connection ...
between the King and Lord Lingyu..
and that thread...
cannot be disrupted easily
Brother Yuanren...
YOU...
You were right

Lord Ling...
must be hurt..
by the words...
of the Prime Minister and the other lords..
NINGHU.
YES!

ARE YOU THE TYPE...
WHO SEES THE MASTER
AS EVERYTHING IN LIFE?
EH?
YOUR FACE TELLS ME THAT YOU ARE WORRIED.
IT IS ALREADY NIGHTFALL,
SO I MUST RETURN!
Lord Ling saw through me again!

STAY.
STAY AND ACCOMPANY ME.

JUST LIKE...
WHAT YOU DO WITH YUANREN...
NINGHU...
THIS PALACE IS FULL OF LIES.
MY LORD!
YOU PROMISED LORD JING THAT YOU WOULD LET ME RETURN!
AND LORD JING WILL NEVER DO SUCH THINGS!

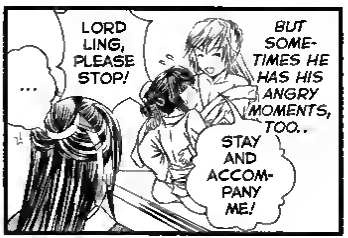
FORGET ABOUT YOUR SOBER SELF!
Yuanren!
AN ETERNAL DREAM.
SUCH NUMEROUS DECEPTIONS ...
MAKES THIS PLACE INTO A SURREAL WORLD.
IMAGINE THAT YOU ARE...
WITHIN THE BUTTERFLY'S DREAM!

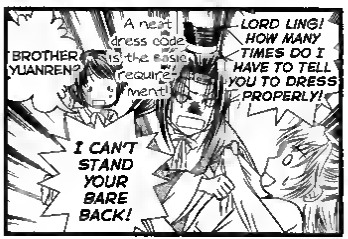
面對陰晴不定的陵鈺大人，
讓寧湖也摸不著頭緒。
大臣密謀的暗殺事件，陵鈺能逃過一劫？
寧湖在宮中的真實身分會被陵鈺看穿嗎？
隨著淀王回宮，一切又將引起新的波瀾…

敬請期待《緋色王城》第2集！

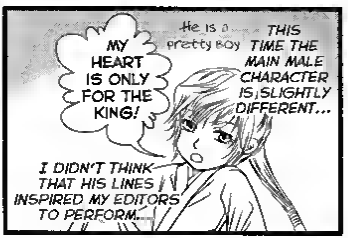
The Persistent Chamberlain

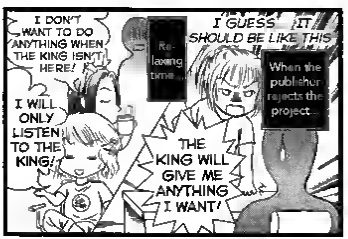
INNATELY NEAT AND DILIGENT. NOT ONLY FASTIDIOUS BUT ALSO ELEGANT.
THIS IS THE SERAGLIO'S MOST POWERFUL KEEPER, QUEEN'S CHAMBERLAIN JING YUANREN.
Drum roll please




BROTHER YUANREN?
A neat dress code is the basic requirement!
LORD LING! HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU TO DRESS PROPERLY!
I CAN'T STAND YOUR BARE BACK!

Classic Dialogue?


MY HEART IS ONLY FOR THE KING!
He is a pretty boy
THIS TIME THE MAIN MALE CHARACTER IS SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT...
I DIDN'T THINK THAT HIS LINES INSPIRED MY EDITORS TO PERFORM...


I DON'T WANT TO DO ANYTHING WHEN THE KING ISN'T HERE!
I GUESS IT SHOULD BE LIKE THIS
Relaxing time...
When the publisher rejects the project...
I WILL ONLY LISTEN TO THE KING!
THE KING WILL GIVE ME ANYTHING I WANT!